



Pacific Electric ROW/West Santa Ana Branch Corridor
Alternatives Analysis
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #4

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Bellflower City Hall
 Green Room
 16600 Civic Center Drive
 Bellflower, CA 90706

Meeting Notes

Attendees	Organization
Philip Law	SCAG
Naresh Amatya	SCAG
Stephen Fox	SCAG
Alan Patashnick	Metro
Renee Berlin	Metro
Jon Grace	Metro
Wendy Garcia	OCTA
Mary Nguyen	FTA
Linda Wright	Caltrans District 7
John Walker	Los Angeles County DPW
Anton Garabeth	CPUC
Lupe C. Valdez	Union Pacific Railroad
Karen Heit	Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Jerry Wood	Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Michael Kodama	OLDA
Jim Biery	City of Buena Park
Deborah Chankin	City of Bellflower
Hal Arbogast	City of Cerritos
Kamran Dadbeh	City of Cypress
Keith Jones	City of Garden Grove
Douglas Dumhart	City of La Palma
Jimmy Ewenike	City of Los Angeles, LADOT
G. Daniel Ojeda	City of Lynwood
Dave Biondolillo	City of Santa Ana
Alvie Betancourt	City of South Gate
Kevin Wilson	City of Vernon

Invitees	Organization
Nancy Michali	AECOM
Yara Jasso	AECOM
Joel Ulloa	AECOM
Katherine Padilla	Katherine Padilla & Associates
Gary Hamrick	Iteris
Candice Fukuzaki	Iteris

1. Welcome

- P. Law began the meeting with introductions. He then briefly explained that the purpose of the meeting was to have a discussion about and answer any questions regarding the Alternative Analysis Process, the Draft Purpose and Need Report, the Initial Screening Approach, and the second series of Community Meetings.

2. Alternatives Analysis Process

- N. Michali explained to everyone that the project team would like to walk the TAC members through and talk about the AA process, and how the study's end result may change. We are currently completing the initial assessment of the Initial Set of Alternatives in the AA process. N. Michali continued to explain that, given that the AA study covers two counties with divergent priorities, it is possible that this AA study may conclude with the identification and analysis of the Final Set of Alternatives and not with selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). In this case, the project team would complete the technical analysis and the AA process, but no LPA recommendation would be made. The next study phase would be led by Metro, because Measure R funding has been identified for the Los Angeles County portion of any resulting project. Within Orange County, the Santa Ana-Garden Grove Fixed Guideway Project is studying utilization of their portion of the Corridor right-of-way (ROW) for a Street Car Project. She asked if there were any concerns regarding the fact that this process may not produce a LPA?
 - R. Berlin (Metro): If the study does not result in an LPA, the range of identified alternatives would have to be within the funding constraints of Measure R for this project, along with any cost savings from the I-5 Freeway project.
 - N. Michali: Typically, with a AA study, a final recommendation reflects, but is not based on funding constraints. It is when the LPA decision is made that funding availability is considered and may be reflected in project phasing.
 - K. Heit: So what will we end up with at the end of the AA process?
 - N. Michali: We would probably end up with No Build and TSM options and several Build alternatives (the Final Set of Alternatives) that would be recommended by the TAC and Steering Committees at the next meetings. There would be detailed technical information about the proposed alternatives that Metro Board would then make a decision on which option(s) to move forward with, because they will be the implementing and operating agency.
- D. Chankin: What action will SCAG take, if any?

- P. Law: SCAG's Regional Council would forward the study results and any alternative recommendations to the Metro and OCTA Boards for their action. In terms of a Build Alternative, the study may not have a single recommendation.
- G. Wood: How would that fit into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)?
 - P. Law: The Pacific Electric Right-of-Way/West Santa Ana Branch (PEROW/WSAB) Corridor is included in the current RTP. In addition, the WSAB portion of the Corridor is identified as part of Metro's Measure R and *2009 Long Range Transportation Plan*. We just do not have a specific project definition at this point, and that would be a Metro and/or OCTA Board decision.
 - G. Wood: If we do not have a good project definition now, how does that weave itself into the RTP? Is that a loose end?
 - J. Grace: I do not think so. The RTP definition is general and will not become more specific until a Metro Board decision is made.
 - D. Chankin: So you are saying that the Los Angeles County portion of the ROW is in the RTP, but the Orange County portion is not?
 - N. Michali: The entire Corridor is identified in the RTP, but currently is only addressed by Metro's LRTP, not OCTA's. OCTA has a recently updated version of their Long Range Transportation Plan. Wendy, how is this Corridor project reflected on that plan?
 - W. Garcia: This Corridor is not currently listed as a specific project, but will be incorporated by reference. I just do not know how exactly; it may be incorporated as a part of the unconstrained portion of our LRTP.
 - D. Chankin: Will it be identified as a transit corridor?
 - W. Garcia: I'm not sure, but it will definitely be incorporated as an unconstrained project.
- N. Michali: What is Metro's timing on your LRTP?
 - Berlin: Ours was adopted just last year.
 - N. Michali: If a Metro Board decision were made regarding a specific project for this corridor, would you incorporate it in the LRTP?
 - Berlin: It is incorporated in the LRTP as part of the financially constrained plan with \$240 million identified through Measure R.
 - K. Heit: What it needs is a project definition, which it won't have at the end of this process.
 - N. Michali: And if this project is part of the 30/10 plan, even though that policy has not been adopted by the Metro Board?
 - Berlin: The 30/10 Plan has been adopted. It is important to note however that 30/10 is not a funding mechanism, but it is a policy for Metro to go and seek additional funding.
- G. Wood: I'm not sure where the project would lead, if we do not have concrete recommendations.
- D. Chankin: You are positing this as a possibility if there is no consensus, or for another reason?
 - N. Michali: One of the concerns that we have is that SCAG is not the implementing agency, and the implementing agencies need to make the ultimate decision on what project to move forward with as part of their long range planning process.

- D. Chankin: There is nothing that precludes the TAC or the SC, at the end of this process, from making a recommendation of an LPA?
- N. Michali: Correct.
- D. Chankin: If there is consensus on a LPA that can then be recommended, would that recommendation be made to the MPO – and not the transportation authorities? So what are the steps that go beyond this AA study process table?
- N. Michali: No, but it is just a clarification. One of the main issues is funding, and trying to recommend something that is within the available funding of the agency that will implement the project.
- P. Law: SCAG's action will be to forward the recommendation to the OCTA and Metro boards.
- D. Dumhart: What if SCAG does not agree with the recommendation?
- P. Law: I can't speak for what action the Regional Council will make, but it will be dependent on the Steering Committee recommendations.
- D. Chankin: It does not seem like there could not be an LPA, it is just a little unclear as to what the path would be, and it seems like we have another year to figure that out.
 - N. Michali: We could do a first cut at the timeline and steps that would be required for that, as well.
- J. Wood: It just seems like this is a mini-version of High Speed Rail, where this project has no final destination. What are the abilities of OCTA to deliver people to this Corridor?
 - N. Michali: The Santa Ana-Garden Grove Fixed Guideway study will not be done until the end of 2011/early 2012. Whatever their study produces would be reflected in our study.
 - J. Wood: Does the SAGGFG Project have enough definition to define the south end of that project?
 - D. Biondolillo: Yes, our purpose and need has been approved by FTA.
 - D. Chankin: It would be a fine idea to have a presentation regarding the project.
- N. Michali: As we look to a Northern Connection, we will have a preferred alignment, but it may be a phased recommendation, because there are so many constraints going north along the proposed ROWs and operational/policy issues that will need to be worked out. I think that this group could come up with a recommendation with what the preferred alignment would be.
 - J. Wood: Do we have detailed information on the constraints of all of the possible alignments?
 - N. Michali: Yes, and I would be happy to present it again with greater detail and updated maps.
 - J. Wood: It would be important to look at these alignments at greater detail.
 - N. Michali: We can do it our next meeting on February 15th. The northern connection is the most challenging connection from the PEROW/WSAB Corridor ROW, but it passes through areas where most of the future ridership would be. There are definitely opportunities out there, but it will take some technical and political work to bring it to fruition. Talking about the next steps is very important, because we need everyone to be on board in order for this project to move forward.

- M. Kodama: Los Angeles City Councilman Huizar's office has expressed interest and support for a northern connection, but they have not specified which corridor is best from their perspective.
- K. Wilson (Vernon): Are you looking at splitting the two counties, in case one county decides it doesn't want to move forward?
 - N. Michali: Yes. We have come up with initial implementation phasing concepts that shows Los Angeles County moving forward first. We can talk about the proposed phasing at our next meeting.
- J. Wood: At the Steering Committee meeting next month, you are looking for a concurrence on a Final Set of Alternatives, which means that on the 15th you would need a recommendation from the TAC. It seems a bit ambitious given the material that needs to be reviewed. If that is so, can you please send all of that information ahead of time so that we can all review, because I think that is what is going to drive the LPA.
 - N. Michali: For the project team, if the decision on the Final Set of Alternatives is not made until March or April, the schedule still works. We have about 4-5 months of technical work after the Final Set is identified, and we have some play in the schedule to accomplish that, given that we cannot have public meetings until September. We have time to get this process back in focus, and we should take it.
 - K. Wilson: If we haven't seen the alternatives yet, I don't know how we can approve any recommendations in a short time frame.
 - N. Michali: We are not approving a northern connection. We are saying that we have four possible connections.
 - J. Wood: We have to be aware of the physical limitations of the northern connection. If there is a way to package all of this information and details, I think it would be helpful. It would be great to receive it prior to the 15th.

3. Evaluation Criteria and Project Goals and Objectives

- N. Michali worked through the *Evaluation Criteria Report* and noted that different agencies have different project approval criteria. She walked the TAC through introduction of the report and noted that she focused on FTA criteria because most implementing agencies (Metro, OCTA, etc.) have similar criteria. For local criteria, we conducted interviews with local cities, stakeholders, and elected officials, held discussions with the TAC and Steering Committee, and received input from the public at the community meetings. The Criteria Summary Chart (page 19) summarizes what the different groups (TAC, SC, Elected Officials, and Community Meetings) contributed as part of these criteria. The key criteria that was identified were the following:
 - 1. Has Public and Stakeholder Support
 - 2. Provides another travel option for residents and employees
 - 3. Connects to the regional transportation system
 - 4. Serves community and Regional trips
 - 5. Provides faster travel speed, relative to vehicular and Blue Line speeds
 - 6. Needs to be a cost/effective solution
 - 7. Needs to support local economic development plans
 - 8. Pedestrian and Bicycle facilities

- 9. Results in minimal community impacts: vibration, noise, acquisition
- A. Patashnick: I noticed there was no check next to “noise and vibration.” What led to not having agreement on that issue?
 - We received Steering Committee and TAC input during an initial work session and asking them the same questions we were going to ask the public at the upcoming community meetings: “How do you think these alternatives should be evaluated?” Noise and vibration was one thing that no one at the TAC mentioned.
- D. Chankin: Reading this document, what was new and illuminating was Table 4.1. It was helpful to understand what level of analysis was going into the Initial Screening. Can you explain what “operating constraints” means a little more?
 - N. Michali: Under this criterion, we evaluate whether there is an existing operator who would operate the system if built, whether there was an existing or planned system in Southern California, and whether the proposed mode met federal requirements for “Buy America.”
 - D. Chankin: Assessment of air quality impacts was based on a conceptual assessment, which included a consultation with the AQMD. In the final screening, is the analysis going to go into any more detail?
 - N. Michali: Typically air quality is not assessed in more detail during an AA study, but rather is deferred to the environmental document phase. Basically all transit modes provide air quality improvements over No Build conditions because you are removing autos. The AQMD was concerned about the DMU, even if it was operated with clean diesel technology.
 - D. Chankin: Is there any Environmental Justice analysis at all throughout the AA?
 - N. Michali: During initial screening, we looked at demographics, income, and transit dependency. Would you like us to look into this issue further?
 - M. Kodama: The cities of Huntington Park and South Gate are going to start work on Environmental Justice grants. You may be able to pull some information from our work.
 - N. Michali: We are currently working on some Environmental Justice for the Metro Green Line Extension. Yara may know what is required under the EIS level of analysis.
 - Y. Jasso: We are looking into everything from demographics, economics, local land use policies, and transit dependency.
 - D. Chankin: I think the perception is that we chose to ignore that completely may be problematic.
 - P. Law: If you look at page 32, there is a preliminary assessment of probable impacts based on similar projects in the final screening.
 - D. Chankin: There is a reference to a Corridor Mobility Problem – is that part of the Purpose and Need Document?
 - N. Michali: The Corridor Mobility Problem provides the basis for the project Purpose and Need.
 - D. Chankin: What is the FTA Transportation System User Benefits?
 - N. Michali: It is the hours of travel times savings provided by the proposed alternatives.
 - M. Nguyen (FTA): Transportation System User Benefits looks at the benefit to the user; it measures the overall benefits of each of the alternatives.

- R. Berlin: There seems to be a lot of emphasis on capital costs compared with operating costs. Could there be a range of what the operating costs would be?
 - N. Michali: We did incorporate a range in the Initial Screening analysis based on existing operating systems for each of the proposed alternatives.
- J. Wood: From the Gateway Cities perspective, we are not worried about funding quite yet. We are driven by what the better project is. Good projects tend to generate or attract money. What does Table 4.1 say exactly?
 - N. Michali: explains what the table looks into and presents.
 - K. Heit: Is there going to be some screening that will look at two separate corridor performance, as a project.
 - N. Michali: Yes. And while people are not making trips from end to end, it works best with both portions of the Corridor. We will be doing ridership modeling to identify that if only the Los Angeles County portion is built, how will the proposed system perform. An initial assessment shows that the Corridor will not perform as well if both segments are not implemented. But it is a 32-mile long corridor, so it will be implemented over time.
 - D. Chankin: If we do get a report from Orange County next month on the Santa Ana-Garden Grove Fixed Guideway Project, it will help us conceptualize this whole question of corridor connectivity. I think it is important that when a rider says they want system connectivity to distinguish what a rider means from what an operator means. A rider is generally concerned about travel time, wait time, safety, and fare. A better understanding of Orange County planning efforts would be helpful.
- J. Wood: From Gateway Cities perspective and our strategic transportation study, how does this project fit into that? If this is such a great corridor, should we consider improving our highways? What can this Corridor do, could it relieve us from having to build other projects? I think noting how it fits into other projects is very important.

4. Purpose and Need Report

- J. Wood presented an overview of Gateway Cities Studies and Projects underway and explained that this was to ensure that as part of the AA process identifies how this project (PEROW/WSAB Corridor) fits into other planned projects. How can the proposed project serve as a feeder to the other transportation systems? From a Gateway Cities perspective, he stated that this project's relationship to the subregion's other systems and/or studies should be an important part of the evaluation criteria.
- N. Michali: What is the timing for the completion of these studies?
 - J. Wood: They are all underway and everything is going to be completed this year and the next. We need to integrate the study efforts and projects. I think this project can have an impact on the 605, 710, 91, and the 5 freeway projects, and can lead Gateway Cities to setting priorities.
 - N. Michali: When will you have your first recommendations, or know in which direction you are going?
 - J. Wood: By the end of this year. That is one of the reasons why we need to inform your study.

- W. Garcia: From OCTA's perspective, I know that our Board has been investigating what to do with this Corridor for some time. But, again, there is no money in Measure M for this project, and there are a few cities that are not too supportive of a transit system running through them. In addition, there are many challenges at street crossings, where some board members have strongly favored underground alignments. For these reasons, I want to be able to give them the best information in order for the OCTA Board to make the best decision, while still being realistic.
 - J. Wood: I agree. The work that we have been involved with in high speed rail really informs those details. When the AA was done for the high speed rail system, it was really flawed. I think it is important to get into those details out, and surface all of these challenges before making a recommendation, because I know that the high speed rail folks did not surface several of those kinds of challenges until it was too late in the process. That is why I continue to ask about the "devil is in the details." If there are difficulties, what are they? If I was a SC member, I would want to know those details.
- N. Michali introduced Garry Hamrick and Candice Fukuzaki from Iteris to explain and provide an overview of how they performed their technical analysis that provided the basis for the Purpose and Need.
- G. Hamrick provided an overview of their evaluation methodologies and results.
- J. Wood: Did you look into the 405, 605, 91 freeway stuff, and just not include it in this list?
 - G. Hamrick: Yes, it is in the complete report.
- J. Wood: How do I interpret Figure 13? Does it inform that the PEROW Corridor could capture all of the trips demonstrated?
 - G. Hamrick: It is showing that there is a lot of travel demand between the Corridor sections.
 - J. Wood: Why is there no travel patterns demonstrated along the I-5? I think it is a critical piece of information.
 - G. Hamrick: If we had looked at Los Angeles and Orange Counties as a whole, those trips would have been captured. The next part of the modeling will show that information. For example, the modeling will analyze what the difference in trips along the I-5 Freeway would be if a transit mode is provided in that corridor. This is just telling us where people want to go today with no transportation system in place.
 - J. Wood: When you do that part of the modeling we should talk about the different systems that you could include as part of the modeling, like high speed rail.
- D. Chankin: It was a bit difficult to understand what relationship there was between your analysis and what it means for folks living within the four-mile buffer from the Corridor.
 - G. Hamrick: We will revisit that information and present it differently, so that it makes more sense.
- K. Wilson: How did you define the subareas?
 - G. Hamrick: In some cases it was from the Metro model, and in other cases subareas were defined based on council of government (COG) boundaries.
 - K. Wilson: Maybe should distinguish the two.
- N. Michali: Can you please review your comments on page 15 on what you found were the key travel markets?

- G. Hamrick: Our analysis showed that there is a strong travel market between Orange County Northwest and the Gateway Cities and Orange County West. There are a large number of trips between the Orange County subregions as well. There is a strong potential travel market between Gateway Cities North, San Gabriel Valley, and Downtown Los Angeles.
- M. Kodama: In your analysis, did you find a big difference between AM and PM peak travel in both directions?
- N. Michali: There was only one freeway (I-710) where peak period travel was not identified as being in both directions.
- M. Kodama: Could you look at how this would connect to other parts of the regional transit?
 - G. Hamrick: That analysis would be part of the next phase of the modeling exercise. The modelers will look specifically at walking time, transit time, transferring time, etc. with other systems.
 - N. Michali: And those coefficients are specific to the Southern California region, which have been validated by FTA modeling standards.
- N. Michali: We have prepared a Corridor-specific model that has been validated for current Corridor travel conditions. We used the Los Angeles Metro model and expanded it to include Orange County using OCTAM information. We have completed this effort, and the model is ready to go.

5. Next Meeting

Purpose: Review Initial Screening Report and Results, and discuss recommendations for Final Set of Alternatives,
 Clarify the steps that lead to the adoption of an LPA,
 Ask for a presentation on the Santa Ana-Garden Grove Fixed Guideway Project,
 Provide an analysis of the Northern Connections right-of-way constraints

Proposed for: Tuesday, February 15, 2011, 1:30 PM

Location: City of Buena Park, Walter D. Ehlers Community Center – Liberty Hall, 8150 Knott Avenue, Buena Park, CA 90620

6. Upcoming Schedule of Study Efforts

▪ Technical Advisory Committee Meeting	February 15
▪ Steering Committee Meeting	February 23
▪ Concurrence on Final Set of Alternatives	February 23
▪ Initiate Final Screening Efforts	February 28